

MIGRATION OF THE DAYAK BAHAU TRIBE FROM MUYUB AKET VILLAGE TO TUKUL VILLAGE, WEST KUTAI REGENCY 1825-2025

Carolyn Stevia Sari Marta ^{a*)}, Sainal A. ^{a)}, Norhidayat ^{a)}, Muhamad Sopyan ^{a)}

^{a)} Universitas Mulawarman, Samarinda, Indonesia

^{*)}Corresponding Author: carolinstevie@gmail.com

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Abstract: The migration of the Dayak Bahau Tribe from Muyub Aket Village to Tukul Village, West Kutai Regency, during the period 1825–2025 is a complex phenomenon involving social, cultural, and economic dynamics. This research aims to reconstruct the history of migration, identify the driving factors, adaptation mechanisms, and socio-cultural impacts that arise. The research method used a *qualitative* approach, with *in-depth interviews*, participatory observations, and local historical documentation studies, involving six key informants who had in-depth knowledge about migration. The results show that migration occurs in three waves, influenced by Dutch colonial pressures, environmental conditions, local beliefs, and the need for fertile land. The migration process is carried out collectively through customary meetings, fair land distribution, and gradual settlement development. From a socio-economic perspective, the community maintains traditional livelihoods such as farming, selling rattan, and fishing, while integrating modern jobs such as civil servants, honorary, and mining. The socio-cultural aspect is maintained through the preservation of Hudoq rituals, customary structures, and harmonious relations with immigrant tribes. These findings confirm that Dayak Bahau migration is not just a physical displacement, but also a sustainable process of *socio-cultural* and economic adaptation, reflecting the resilience and flexibility of indigenous communities in the face of environmental change and modernization. This study contributes to the historiographic literature on migration and *cultural sustainability* in East Kalimantan.

Keywords: *Dayak Bahau*, Migration, Cultural Adaptation, Historiography, *Socio-Economic Change*

I. INTRODUCTION

Human migration is a phenomenon that has occurred since humans first lived in groups [1]. Migration is not just about moving from one region to another, but also involves social, economic, and cultural dynamics [2]. In general, these displacements arise in response to various factors, both internal such as limited resources, conflicts, or social pressures, or external factors such as natural disasters, climate change, or political and economic policies that affect people's lives [3]. This phenomenon shows that human mobility is an integral part of the development of civilization and inter-community interaction [4].

Migration often triggers the formation of new social networks and changes in the structure of the community [5]. When groups of people move, they bring with them a system of values, traditions, and cultural practices that have developed from generation to generation [6]. Interaction with the community in the new location allows for the emergence of a process *acculturation* or cultural adaptation, which can result in complex social transformations [7]. Migration is not only a geographical issue, but it also affects group identities, patterns of social relations, and the way communities manage their lives together [8].

Economic aspects are also an important factor in migration. Many communities are moving in search of more fertile farmland, better trade opportunities, or access to more adequate natural resources and services [9]. Migration allows for the redistribution of labor, the emergence of economic innovations, and adaptation to new conditions that can improve the welfare of the group [10]. Displacement also brings economic challenges such as resource competition, market uncertainty, and the risk of loss of livelihoods, so survival strategies are an important part of the migration process [11].

From a historical perspective, migration has been one of the main mechanisms of the spread of culture, language, and technology [12]. The displacement of human groups allows the dissemination of knowledge and innovation, as well as shaping interactions between communities that influence the development of new regions [13]. Historical studies show that migration repeatedly became a motor of social change, triggering political transformation, and shaping new settlement patterns [14]. This phenomenon is also often a source of multidisciplinary research, as it touches on anthropology, sociology, economics, and history aspects at the same time [15].

Migration has long-term implications for the identity and sustainability of communities [16]. Migratory communities must strike a balance between maintaining cultural heritage and adapting to new environmental and social conditions [3]. This process often creates synergies between old traditions and new innovations, allowing groups to survive and thrive [4]. In general, migration shows human flexibility in the face of change, while affirming the importance of mobility as part of universal social dynamics.

Research [1] noted that the migration of the Batak tribe was a very difficult, struggle-filled process, in which many tribal members faced complex environmental, social, and economic challenges. This migration involves not only physical displacement, but also cultural adaptation, including land management and customs maintenance, demonstrating the importance of social resilience in the migration process. Research [17] discusses the influence of colonial policies on the migration of the Sundanese to Sumatra, showing that social and economic changes are often catalysts for ethnic displacement. Tracing the migration of the Javanese tribe through language distribution by [18] It also shows that population displacement leaves linguistic traces that facilitate migration historiography.

Although the Dayak Bahau migration movement has been going on for nearly two centuries, there are still many questions regarding the motivations, adaptation mechanisms, and long-term impacts of these migrations. One of the main problems is the lack of comprehensive historical documentation, which makes it difficult to accurately reconstruct the chronology of migration. Environmental changes, modernization, and interactions with other ethnic groups have created confusion in understanding the continuity of culture and tribal identity. Another challenge arises from the shift in the local economy that has forced some communities to adjust their survival strategies, both in agriculture and trade. All of these issues point to the need to examine Dayak Bahau migration with a multidimensional approach, combining *socio-cultural*, economic, and linguistic aspects in order to obtain a holistic picture.

This study aims to reconstruct the history of the migration of the Dayak Bahau Tribe from Muyub Aket Village to Tukul Village in the period 1825–2025, focusing on the driving factors, adaptation processes, and socio-cultural impacts that arise. Specifically, this study aims to analyze how social structures and customary traditions are maintained or undergo transformation during migration, as well as map economic changes and inter-tribal relationships in new locations. Another goal is to contribute to the historiographic literature of migration in Kalimantan, so that it becomes a comprehensive reference for anthropological research, history, and regional development studies.

The urgency of this research lies in the need for a deep understanding of how indigenous communities manage displacement and environmental change while maintaining their cultural identity. Migration is not only a geographical phenomenon, but also an indicator of social resilience, economic adaptation strategies, and mechanisms for preserving traditions. By studying the case of Dayak Bahau,

this study provides important insights for policymakers, historians, and anthropologists about the dynamics of long-term migration, while highlighting how local communities are coping with modernization pressures without losing their cultural roots. This study is relevant for *cultural sustainability* and indigenous people-based development strategies.

The uniqueness of this research lies in its broad scope covering nearly two centuries of Dayak Bahau migration journeys and a multidimensional approach that combines historiography, anthropology, and socio-economic analysis. Unlike previous studies that focused more on Batak, Sundanese, or Javanese migrations, this study exclusively traced the migration experience of one tribe in the East Kalimantan region, paying attention to aspects of cultural adaptation, economic transformation, and cross-tribal interactions in new locations. This research utilizes local sources, oral narratives, and historical documents, thus providing a new perspective that is *rich in ethnographic detail* and in-depth on the history of Dayak Bahau migration.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach to deeply understand the migration process of the Dayak Bahau Tribe from Muyub Aket Village to Tukul Village. This approach was chosen because the historical, social, and cultural characteristics of migration require descriptive analysis. With qualitative methods, researchers can explore cultural experiences, perceptions, and practices of communities that cannot be quantitatively measured, including customary rituals, social adaptation mechanisms, and economic strategies implemented during displacement.

The respondents in this study consisted of 6 key informants, who were selected purposively based on criteria: having knowledge of family migration history, being active in customary activities, and having lived in Tukul Village for at least 20 years. The six respondents included traditional leaders, village elders, and family members who were directly involved in the adaptation process in the new location. The selection of these respondents allowed for the collection of comprehensive data and diverse perspectives on social, cultural, and economic dynamics during migration.

The data collection techniques used include in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and local historical documentation studies. Interviews were conducted with open-ended questions so that respondents could relate their experiences and memories of migration in detail, while participatory observations focused on cultural practices, community governance, and daily economic activities. The collected data was then analyzed thematically to identify the patterns, relationships, and socio-cultural changes that occurred during the two centuries of migration, resulting in a complete understanding of the journey of the Dayak Bahau tribe.

III. RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted in Tukul Village, West Kutai Regency, East Kalimantan, which is the final location of the migration of the Dayak Bahau Tribe from Muyub Aket Village. Tukul Village was chosen as the location of the research because it is the place where the Dayak Bahau people currently live, as well as the center of their social, cultural, and economic activities. This location provides an opportunity to observe firsthand daily life, customary traditions, and socio-economic changes that have occurred since the community settled in a new place. The geographical conditions of the village are relatively flat, close to water sources, and have fertile soil make it representative to study the impact of migration on the social and economic structure of the Dayak Bahau community.

Table 1. Observation Results in Tukul Village

Observed Aspects	Key Findings	Additional Details
Road Infrastructure	Sirtu roads are mostly passable by motorbikes and cars	Heavy rain makes roads flooded and slippery
Water Access	Wells and rivers as the main source of water	The process of clean water development is still ongoing
Electricity and Networks	Electricity has entered most homes, the network is sometimes disrupted	Previously it was only generators, now most of them are connected to PLN
Education	Play Group, Kindergarten, Elementary, Junior High School Available	There is no high school yet, you have to go to the district
Health	Pustu is available, posyandu once a month	Limited equipment, referral to large hospitals requires long journeys
Economic Activity	Farming, selling rattan, fishing, working in mines, civil servants, honorary	A combination of traditional and modern livelihoods
Social Relations	Good interaction with the immigrant tribe	Mutual tolerance and respect for each other
Traditional Traditions	Hudoq ritual is still being carried out	Preservation by the younger generation with the support of traditional leaders

Based on the results of observations, it can be seen that Tukul Village has undergone significant transformation in social, economic, and infrastructure aspects, although it still faces limitations in several sectors. Roads, which are mostly in the form of sirtus, facilitate daily mobility, but high rainfall is an obstacle to transportation operations, showing that infrastructure development still needs to be improved. Access to water sources shows a transition from the use of traditional wells and rivers to clean water systems, although not fully optimal. Electricity that mostly goes into households indicates the progress of modernization, but the grid is still vulnerable to disruptions. In the field of education and health, significant progress can be seen in the availability of Play Groups to junior high schools and Pustu, but limited facilities require people to travel to districts for more complete services. The economic activities of the

community show a combination of traditional livelihoods such as farming and fishing, as well as modern jobs in the mining, civil servants, and honorary sectors, reflecting economic adaptation to new environmental conditions. The harmonious social relations with the immigrant tribe and the preservation of the Hudoq tradition indicate that the modernization transformation does not erode the social and cultural structure, but rather forms a balance between innovation and the preservation of indigenous values.

Table 2. Respondent Interview Results

Respondents	Migration Background	Moving Process	Socio-Economic	Socio-Cultural
Bokeq Lawing	Dutch colonizers forced them to choose between staying or moving	Wave 1: Muyub Aket → Umaq Apoq	Farming, selling rattan, looking for fish	Fixed traditional structure, Hudoq ritual preserved
Grandpa Udung	External pressure and desire for fertile soil	Wave 1: Muyub Aket → Umaq Apoq	Farming, market access was difficult before	Tradition remains, good relations with immigrant tribes
Om Hayeq	Joint decision of traditional leaders	Wave 2: Umaq Apoq → Umaq Menaq	Working in mines, honorary, civil servants	The traditional head is chosen based on lineage, Hudoq ritual
Grandpa Net	The influence of nature and the need for water and fertile land	Wave 2: Umaq Apoq → Umaq Menaq	Farming, a combination of traditional-modern work	Leadership structure follows government procedures
Grandpa Yan	Dutch colonizers forced migration decisions	Wave 3: Umaq Menaq → Kampung Tukul	Small businesses, farms, rattan, fish	Fixed traditional rituals, harmonious interaction with migrants
Olin	Dutch colonial pressure, wanting to defend land rights	Wave 3: Umaq Menaq → Kampung Tukul	Farming, selling agricultural products, working in mines	Preservation of Hudoq rituals, cultural values remain strong

Analysis of the interview table shows that the migration motivation of the Dayak Bahau community was influenced by a combination of external and internal factors, especially Dutch colonial pressure and the need for fertile land and adequate access to water. The migration process is divided into three waves for different reasons, ranging from colonial influences, mystical factors, to natural disasters such as landslides and disease outbreaks, indicating that displacement is not only a strategic decision, but also a response to environmental and social conditions. From a socio-economic perspective, it can be seen that there is continuous adaptation, people maintain traditional livelihoods such as farming, selling rattan, and fishing, while developing modern jobs such as civil servants, honorary, and jobs in mines, showing economic flexibility. The socio-cultural aspect is maintained, with the Hudoq ritual being maintained, the traditional structure being respected, and harmonious relations with the immigrant tribes, affirming the continuity of cultural identity in the midst of changes in

location and living conditions. The results of the interviews show that migration is not only a physical displacement, but also a complex social, economic, and cultural adaptation process, which involves collective decisions, the involvement of indigenous leaders, and the preservation of ancestral values.

Table 3. Chronology of Dayak Bahau Migration

Waves	Year	Origin Location	Destination Location	Reasons for Migration	How to Migrate / Process	Figures Involved
1	1825–1975	Kampung Muyub Aket	Umaq Apoq Village	Dutch colonial pressure defended the right of the territory to seek fertile land for farming	Community collective decisions, customary meetings, land division, starting farming, building stilt houses	Bokeq Lawing, Grandpa Udung
2	1975–1988	Umaq Apoq Village	Umaq Menaq Village	Mystical beliefs: many citizens disappeared due to the interference of spirit beings choosing the highlands	Customary meetings, moving in groups, choosing a location safe from flooding, building new settlements	Om Hayeq, Grandpa Net
3	1988–2025	Umaq Menaq Village	Hammer Village	Landslides, disease outbreaks, youth mortality fertile land, flat, easy access to water	Customary meetings, equitable distribution of land, farming first, building stilt houses in stages	Grandpa Yan, Olin

From the migration chronology table, it can be seen that the migration of the Dayak Bahau tribe occurred gradually and was influenced by a combination of external and internal factors. The first wave was directly influenced by Dutch colonialism, emphasizing political pressure and land rights. The second wave was triggered by mystical beliefs and environmental conditions, suggesting that spiritual and natural factors play a significant role in community decision-making. The third wave emphasizes practical considerations such as safety, health, and land fertility, reflecting the evolution of migration motivations from political pressures to environmental and welfare factors. The migration process is always carried out collectively with customary meetings, equitable land distribution, and gradual settlement development, indicating that strategic decisions always consider social, economic, and cultural aspects. The presence of traditional leaders in each wave affirms the role of indigenous leadership as a regulator of migration and a guarantor of the preservation of traditions.

Table 4. Livelihoods and Economic Activities

Period	Traditional Livelihoods	Modern/Extra Livelihoods	Access to Resources/Economic Infrastructure	Additional Details
1825–1975	Farming, fishing, selling rattan	–	Market access via river	Transportation is difficult, field produce and rattan are sold in the local market
1975–1988	Farming, growing vegetables and fruits	–	Road access is starting to exist, still difficult	Limited infrastructure, local needs-based economy
1988–2025	Farming, rattan, fish	Civil servants, honorary, mines, small businesses	Adequate sirtu roads, electricity comes in, market access is easier	Economic transformation is visible, a combination of traditional and modern, some land is cultivated by companies

This table shows the economic transition of the Dayak Bahau community from a traditional livelihood to a traditional-modern combination. At the beginning of migration, the economy was entirely dependent on fields, forest products, and rivers, with limited market access. The second wave began to show adaptation to new road access although still limited, reflecting the need for economic flexibility. In the third wave, the combination of modern jobs such as civil servants, honorary, mining, and small businesses became an important part of the community's economic life, but farming was still maintained as part of the cultural heritage. Access to infrastructure, electricity, and roads facilitates the distribution of agricultural products and business development, but the limitations of natural resources due to mining companies indicate a compromise between modernization and the preservation of traditions.

Table 5. Social and Cultural Conditions

Socio-Cultural Aspects	Findings	Additional Details
Leadership Structure	Traditional heads are elected based on lineage, officials follow government procedures	Customary structures are still carried out, adapting to modern regulations
Traditions/Rituals	Hudoq ritual is preserved	Carried out periodically, the younger generation is involved
Inter-Tribal Relations	Harmonious interaction with immigrant tribes	Mutual respect, inter-tribal marriage occurs
Education and Health	Schools to junior high schools are available, Pustu is limited	High school only in districts, limited health services
Social Infrastructure	Jalan sirtu, partial electricity in	Infrastructure is growing, but it still depends on the season and rainfall

Analysis of socio-cultural conditions shows that the Dayak Bahau community has managed to maintain their traditional identity while adapting to modern social changes. The traditional leadership structure is still held by figures who have a lineage, while formal leadership follows government procedures, showing the duality of social structure. The preservation of the Hudoq ritual signifies the consistency of cultural values maintained by the old and young generations. Harmonious relations with immigrant

tribes illustrate tolerance and adaptability to new communities, while developments in education and health demonstrate the integration of modern services with local needs. Social infrastructure such as roads and electricity show progress, but dependence on weather confirms that there are still physical limitations that must be overcome in order to make socio-economic life more stable.

The migration of the Dayak Bahau tribe from Muyub Aket Village to Tukul Village in the period 1825–2025 shows the complexity of migration phenomena that are not only physical but also include social, economic, and cultural dimensions. This study found that the displacement of the Dayak Bahau community occurred in three main waves, each influenced by a combination of internal and external factors. The first wave, 1825–1975, was driven by Dutch colonial pressure, the need to defend land rights, and the search for fertile land for farming. This motivation is in line with the findings of Hidayat et al. (2025) which emphasized the colonial influence on the displacement of local communities, where political and economic interventions by external parties are the main triggers of ethnic migration. In Dayak Bahau, the decision to move is made through customary deliberation involving community leaders, showing that collective mechanisms are an integral part of traditional community decision-making. This is in line with the concept of *collective decision-making* in ethnic migration described by Bell (2023), where social resilience and the legitimacy of indigenous leadership are determinants of adaptation success.

The second wave of migration, 1975–1988, emphasized the role of mystical and environmental factors. Many residents choose to move from Umaq Apoq to Umaq Menaq because they experience a phenomenon that is considered to be a disturbance of spirit beings, and to find a location that is safer from flooding. Spiritual factors and local beliefs as triggers for migration are similar to the findings of Relina et al. (2025) regarding the migration of the Bugis people, where *aspects of cultural belief* and perception of the environment influence the decision to move. In this wave, the social structure is maintained, the Hudoq ritual is preserved, and the relationship with the immigrant community remains harmonious. These findings suggest that migration does not necessarily erode cultural identity; rather, it can strengthen the mechanisms of preserving traditions through contextual adaptation to the new environment. According to Putra (2022), this adaptation mechanism allows communities to maintain ancestral values while adjusting socio-economic practices to remain relevant to local conditions.

The third wave, 1988–2025, reflects a shift in migration motivation from colonial pressures and mystical factors to practical considerations such as safety from natural disasters, disease outbreaks, and the need for fertile land with easy access to water. The settlement in Tukul Village shows a mature adaptation strategy, where the community maintains the principle of customary deliberation, divides the land fairly, and builds settlements gradually. The socio-economic adaptation that occurred here is consistent with the findings of Kumar et al. (2023) regarding internal migration in India, which emphasizes the

importance of a combination of traditional and modern economic strategies to improve community well-being. In Dayak Bahau, this adaptation can be seen from the combination of traditional livelihoods such as farming, fishing, and selling rattan, with modern jobs such as civil servants, honorary, and mining. This change demonstrates high economic flexibility while affirming the sustainability of traditions as part of the adaptation strategy.

From the socio-cultural side, research shows that the traditional leadership structure is still carried out consistently even though it is integrated with modern government procedures. Traditional chiefs are elected based on lineage, while formal administration follows government regulations, reflecting the adaptive duality of social structures. This phenomenon is in line with the findings of Sibuea (2022) in the study of Batak migration, which showed that indigenous communities are able to maintain traditional leadership as a mechanism of social stability during migration, even when interacting with modern norms. The preservation of the Hudoq ritual, which is still carried out by the younger generation with the support of traditional leaders, shows that cultural values are not only inherited, but also adapted to be relevant to modern life. Harmonious interaction with immigrant tribes affirms the ability of Dayak Bahau to build cross-ethnic social relations, which according to Ningsih et al. (2022) is an indicator of social adaptability and *cultural integration* in the long-term migration process.

Infrastructure and access to social services such as education and health have also undergone significant transformation. The sirtu road, which is mostly passable by vehicles, electricity that enters most homes, and the availability of schools up to the junior high school level, show the progress of modernization. Even so, the limitations of facilities such as limited Pustu and high schools that must be accessed in the district show the infrastructure challenges that still exist. This transformation is in line with the results of research by Velte et al. (2023) which emphasized the importance of infrastructure access in supporting the economic and social adaptation of migrant communities. In Dayak Bahau, infrastructure advances allow for easier distribution of agricultural products and rattan, while supporting the diversification of modern work, without reducing attachment to traditional practices.

The economic analysis of migration shows a transition from a complete dependence on traditional livelihoods to a traditional-modern combination. In the early period, people relied on farming, fishing, and selling rattan with market access through rivers, according to the findings of Mistri (2022) who stated that historical migration was often limited by transportation and market access. In the second wave, road access began to be available although limited, allowing for local economic adjustment. In the third wave, the integration of modern jobs such as civil servants, honorary, mine, and small businesses occurred simultaneously with the preservation of fields and forest production, reflecting an economic diversification strategy that is in line with the principle of *socio-economic resilience* described by Rao (2025). This approach shows that migration is not only a response to environmental pressures,

but also an economic adaptation strategy that ensures the long-term sustainability of communities.

The findings on the chronology of Dayak Bahau migration also emphasized the importance of indigenous leadership and collective decision-making. Each wave of migration involves indigenous leaders who lead customary meetings, organize land divisions, and determine settlement locations. The role of indigenous leaders as mediators, decision-makers, and custodians of tradition is in accordance with the concept of Akinola & Magam (2025) on how local leadership facilitates migration and socio-economic adaptation. Dayak Bahau migration is not just a physical displacement, but also a mechanism of collective learning and the transfer of cultural values, which strengthens social cohesion and community identity.

This study confirms the importance of cultural preservation in modernization. The continued Hudoq rituals, the duality of the leadership structure, and the harmonious relationship with the immigrant tribes show that the Dayak Bahau community is able to balance tradition and innovation. This phenomenon is relevant to the findings of Utomo & Solet (2022) which emphasizes *cultural sustainability* as an important factor in the migration of indigenous communities. Adaptation to modernization, while preserving traditional values, demonstrates the social flexibility that allows communities to cope with external pressures while maintaining identity.

The Dayak Bahau migration provides an overview of the dynamic interaction between external factors, such as colonialism, natural disasters, and environmental changes, with internal factors, including beliefs, customary structures, and economic strategies. This study shows that the success of migration is not only determined by geographical factors, but also by the capacity of communities to make social, economic, and cultural adaptations simultaneously. This study is in line with the results of research by Rajan et al. (2023) which emphasizes the multidimensionality of migration and the role of social networks in adaptation success. The Dayak Bahau migration also shows that the displacement process requires long-term planning, collective engagement, and risk mitigation strategies, including adaptation to environmental conditions and new economic opportunities.

This research makes an important contribution to the historiographic literature of migration in East Kalimantan, as well as to the study of anthropology, sociology, and indigenous people-based development. The Dayak Bahau case is an example of how migration can be a flexible mechanism to maintain cultural survival, adjust economic strategies, and build social cohesion amid modernization pressures. This phenomenon confirms that migration is not just a physical displacement, but a multidimensional adaptation process that shapes the identity and sustainability of communities.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, the migration of the Dayak Bahau Tribe from Kampung Muyub Aket to

Kampung Tukul which lasted for three waves from 1825 to 2025 shows that the displacement of this community was influenced by a combination of external and internal factors that are interrelated, ranging from Dutch colonial pressure, mystical factors and local beliefs, to natural disasters such as landslides and disease outbreaks. The migration process is always carried out collectively through customary meetings involving indigenous leaders and village elders, accompanied by equitable land distribution and gradual settlement development, which reflects the principles of deliberation and justice in community decision-making. In terms of socio-economy, the Dayak Bahau people show high adaptability even though farming, fishing, and selling rattan remain the main livelihoods, they also adjust to modern jobs such as civil servants, honorary, mining, and small businesses, showing the integration between tradition and modern economic development. Infrastructure in Tukul Village has developed significantly, with electricity coming in, relatively easier road access, schools to junior high schools, and health services, although limited, indicating the progress of modernization that still has to pay attention to environmental and resource limitations. Socio-cultural aspects are maintained, including the preservation of Hudoq rituals, traditional leadership structures, and harmonious relations with immigrant tribes, showing the continuity of cultural identity despite being in a new location. The Dayak Bahau migration is not just a physical displacement, but also a complex social, economic, and cultural adaptation process, in which communities manage to balance maintaining their ancestral heritage and adjusting to environmental challenges, modernization, and cross-tribal interactions, making this migration experience a model of indigenous communities' resilience and flexibility in the face of long-term change.

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